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ties at all, at all," said Pat. "Sure there was praties long enough, and never no disease in them; I wonder *how* it comes at all."

"One thing's plain enough, Pat," said Jem, "it was God done it Himself, or let it be done, surely; but still I'm wondering *why* he let it come upon poor creatures?"

"I wonder would the Bible tell us anything about it," said Pat; "I mind now reading about famines, and the Bible allowed it was God sent them, and I'm thinking it allowed, too, it was for the wickedness of the country he sent them."

"Well, sure, that's like enough," said Jem, "and we'll have a look for that same when the work's done."

Well, they could not talk a great deal, because they were so busy; but they had a word now and again. And, when they were going home,

"I wonder," said Pat, "what Father John makes it out to be for?"

"Well, I'll tell you that," said Jem, "for a man that was in chapel on Sunday told me; he said Father John allowed it was the readers done it; for that the readers was come out of the towns of Sodom and Gomorra, in England, that is the wickedest places at all; and that people coming out of them towns here is enough to bring down the vengeance of God upon Ireland entirely; and it was that done it all on the praties, by Father John's account; and, deed, as I heard, he said enough to make the people put the readers out of Ireland entirely, and out of the world too, if they only believed the half what Father John told them."

"And I wonder," said Pat, "does Father John think that Sodom and Gomorra is in England? Don't I know them places is in the Bible, and not in England? But it's little Father John minds what he says, when he thinks the people knows nothing about it. But how did the praty disease come seven or eight years ago, when there was no readers here at all, and no one thinking about the Bible? Sure, didn't all the stir about the Bible begin after the praties got bad? and how would the readers bring it afore they came themselves?"

"Well, I'm thinking," said Jem, "Father John's reason is as bad as his cure; sure, didn't Mr. Smith get a mass said for his praties one time, and it's little the better they were of it; and didn't I go to Father John the first year myself, like the fool I was then, and didn't he give me holy water to put round the heaps for a cure, and didn't every praty in it turn bad on me? and why would his reason be better than his cure?"

"Aye, and don't I mind the second year," said Pat, "when all the country was going to the Blessed Priest\* up in Tullybricken, that was put out of his parish by the bishop for bad living, for blessed salt to put on their praties at setting time (and the nice little living he made for himself out of the poor creatures with his blessed salt), and didn't they all turn out one worse nor another? and after that it's little I mind what the priests say about the praty rot. Sure, it's plain enough that the Lord doesn't let on to them what he's going to do, and why would we look to them for the reason of it?"

"Well, Pat," said Jem, "I'm thinking if any reason is to be got for it all, it's in the Bible we will get it. And, sure, don't we know that nothing but God's own Word can tell beforehand what He is going to do, or the reason of anything that it pleases him to do? and them that doesn't stick to his Word, nor doesn't want the people to see it, sure, it's not them we ought to look to to know what He does, or what He means?"

Well, as they were walking along, they fell in with the Rev. Mr. Owens; and when they had bid the time of day, Mr. Owens asked what they were doing; and they said, digging Mr. Nulty's potatoes; so Mr. Owens asked, how the potatoes turned out; and then, says Pat,

"Why, your reverence, the praties are bad entirely under every clod you turn up."

"Aye," said Mr. Owens, "did you never read anything like that in the Bible?"

"No, your reverence," said Jem, "but we were just wondering would it be there."

So Mr. Owens took out his Bible, and read, "Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God: the seed is rotten under their clods."—Joel i. 16, 17.

"And, your reverence," said Jem, "will you tell us *why* God does the like at all, for sure it be to be Him that does it."

"That's true, certainly," said Mr. Owens; "for the Scripture says, 'The Lord hath called for a famine, and it shall come on the land seven years.'—2 Kings viii. 1."

"And does the Bible tell us anything about the reason of it, your reverence?" said Jem.

"Surely it does," says Mr. Owens; "listen to this;" so Mr. Owens read, "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord will do nothing

but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets."—Amos iii. 6, 7.

"Well, your reverence," said Pat, "that's just it, we want to know the secret of it. Is it for the wickedness of the people that God does it all?"

"That is the reason that God's Word gives," said Mr. Owens; "listen to this—Alas, for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! for they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; then shall ye know that I am the Lord."—Ezekiel vi. 11, 13.

"And what sort of sins is it for? your reverence," said Pat.

"For all sins, and for all turning away from God," said Mr. Owens; "but there are some sins that are specially marked. In the next chapter we read—'Make a chain, for the land is full of bloody crimes' (ch. vii. 23;) and in ch. xxxiii. 25—'Ye shed blood, and shall ye possess the land?'"

"Well," said Pat, "if it wasn't on the road, forment that very field that Mr. Browne, the agent, was shot about land, and the people all working in that very field, and looking on, and not one of them would tell which way the men went that did it!"

"Yes," said Mr. Owens, "the people were banded together then to shed innocent blood for the possession of the land, and God has scattered them off the land since. That is a sin that cries to God against a land; and so does forgetting God, and turning away from the knowledge of his holy word and will."

"And does your reverence think it was all for the sins of the Catholics?" said Jem.

"Indeed, I do not, Jem," said Mr. Owens; "we have all had our sins and our forgetfulness of God and of His word, and His dealings are meant for us all."

"But, your reverence," said Pat, "there's one thing that puzzles me still. When God sent the curse on the praties didn't he hurt them that loved and served him, as well as them that turned away from him? and wouldn't that be enough to make them turn away from him too? sure your reverence's praties were as bad as Father John's, every bit," said Pat, scratching his head.

"We never understand any of God's dealings rightly," said Mr. Owens; "until we learn to understand his love and goodness first. 'He doth not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men.'—(Lamentations iii. 33.) The Prophet Joel, who spoke of the seed being rotten under the clods has showed us that, even to the wicked, God's vengeance is sent in mercy; just listen to this—'Therefore, also, now saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil.'—(Joel ii. 12, 13.) Did you ever read our Saviour's parable of the Prodigal Son, in St. Luke's Gospel?" said Mr. Owens, turning to Pat.

"I did, your reverence," said Pat.

"And what brought him back to his father?" said Mr. Owens.

"It was the famine, your reverence, I mind that well," said Pat. (See St. Luke's Gospel, xv. 14, &c.)

"And there has been a worse famine in Ireland than any we have been talking about," said Mr. Owens; "a famine that makes souls perish; 'not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.'—(Amos viii. 11.) And, don't you see, Pat, that since God sent the disease on the potatoes, He is bringing the people to seek for the Word of God; isn't that using the potatoe famine to drive out a worse famine?"

"That's truth, your reverence," said Jem.

"And don't you be afraid," said Mr. Owens, turning to Pat again, "that those that knew and served God will turn away because he sends them trials; if God means judgment in mercy to them that forget Him, much more to them that know Him; 'whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth,' and He tells them that to comfort them.—(Hebrews xii. 6.) And then they can say with St. Paul, 'who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?'"

In all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

So then they were come to where Mr. Owens must leave them to go his way, and he was bidding them good night kindly; and Pat stopped him for a minute, saying—

"One thing more, your reverence, 'is Sodom and Gomorra in England, for Father John allows it is?'"

So Mr. Owens said, "St. Peter tells us that the Sodom and Gomorra that God destroyed by fire from heaven were meant 'for an example to those that after should live ungodly;' and so wherever there are ungodly men, there is the spiritual Sodom. But if Father John meant that wherever the Bible is read, there is Sodom and Gomorra, you may judge for yourselves of that. But if Father John was wise, he would not talk so much of Sodom and Gomorra being in England, for fear we should show him, out of the Douay Bible, that Babylon is in Rome."

So Mr. Owens bid them good night again, and the boys went home for that night, talking by the road of Mr. Owens and Father John.

\* If the reader will look at the preface to St. Peter's 1st Epistle in the Douay Bible, he will read this: "He wrote it at Rome, which figuratively he calls Babylon;" alluding to ch. v. 13.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We request our correspondent B. H. to give us his address, as, before inserting his communication, we wish for some further information respecting it.

The letter from Passage East, on Infallibility, we regret to say, reached us too late for our present number, but will, with some other communications which we are obliged to omit from want of room, appear in our next.

All letters to be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-st.

No anonymous letter can be attended to. Whatever is sent for insertion must be authenticated by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee for his good faith.

We would request our valued correspondents, both Roman Catholics and Protestants, to limit the length of their communications, and not to discuss a variety of distinct topics in one letter.

Contributors of £1 per annum will be furnished with six copies, any of which will be forwarded, as directed, to nominees of the subscriber. Any one receiving any number of the journal which has not been paid for or ordered by himself, will not be charged for it, and may assume that it has been paid for by a subscriber.

If any of our friends could favour us with a copy or copies of the CATHOLIC LAYMAN, Nos. 2, 8, or 11, to complete sets, we should be greatly obliged.

## The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, OCTOBER, 1853.

THE unexampled success of our attempt to establish in this country a periodical devoted to the investigation of religious truth, in a candid and Christian spirit, has, from time to time, roused among the opponents of free inquiry, lay and clerical, an amount of irritation, which our English neighbours may find it difficult to understand; but which we, who have a better opportunity of studying the various phases of Irish character, are able to appreciate without difficulty.

The era, indeed, has passed away when men of excitable and, perhaps, ferocious habits, among the higher classes of society in Ireland, were ever ready to avenge a slight or an insult, real or imaginary, by an appeal to the sword or the pistol; and when such weapons were generally kept at inns, for the accommodation of gentlemen travellers, who might think proper to order "pistols for two, and breakfast for one," meaning, of course, the *survivor* after the morning's amusement; and when it was no unusual thing for two opposite counsel to fall out in court in discussing a legal point, and retire into a neighbouring field to settle it with pistols, and then return as if nothing had happened, to resume their business in a more peaceable manner, finding the bench, jury, and spectators (who well understood the cause of their absence) quietly waiting to hear which of them was killed. The days, indeed, have happily passed away when five practising barristers might have been daily seen in the Hall of the Four Courts, each of whom had "killed his man." But we were scarcely sanguine enough to suppose, as our wiser and sober-minded English friends might be disposed to do, that with the age of the "Fighting Fitzgeralds" and "Bully Egans," the lowest order of Irish minds had ceased to be excitable, or that the age of calm reasoning and dispassionate fair play, should at once have universally succeeded to that of passionate ferocity, and lawless barbarism.

The progress of education in Ireland has, indeed, wrought wonders within our own experience, but for which the success of such a paper as ours would, we well know, have been impossible; and we cannot but feel a hope for our beloved country, when we peruse not only the able and temperate letters of respected Roman Catholic correspondents, published in our pages,

\* Our readers may have observed that, in Ireland, a Blessed Priest—that is, a priest who pretends to the power of working miracles—is almost always one who has been put out of his parish for immoral conduct; perhaps because he has no other way of living, and such a one has no scruple at living by lies. But these Blessed Priests are much fewer in the country than they used to be; perhaps because the people are getting more sense.

† "Which the Lord hath done?" (Douay Bible). The meaning is that all judgment is from God. The note on this verse in the Douay Bible is a good one: "He speaks of the evil of punishments of war, famine, pestilence, desolation, &c., but not of the evil of sin, of which God is not the author."

but the vastly more extensive private communications from every part of this kingdom, warmly acknowledging the fairness and ability with which we have handled so many important subjects of a controversial character, and adopting almost in words the very sentiment with which we commenced our labours,\* that "if the members of the Church of England and Ireland are ever to be reconciled to the Church of Rome, or those of the Church of Rome to the Church of England, it must be effected by other means, than by exciting men's passions against one another."

We have been so little accustomed to boast of our achievements, that probably it may startle some of our subscribers to hear, that so large has been the demand for our periodical, among both Protestants and Roman Catholics, that, though not yet quite two years in existence, our present issue amounts to the considerable number of 10,000 copies monthly, with every prospect of increasing circulation, in both England and Ireland.

This fact, it appears, has not only become known to those watchful guardians of the public faith, the Roman Catholic clergy (who never fail to acquaint themselves as to such matters with a vigilance which does them credit, so long as it is exercised in a legitimate way); but has at last been trumpeted forth by a portion of the press, with an excitement and an amount of vituperation, which would be in the highest degree amusing, if it were not a sad thing to contemplate any public journal, however small its circulation or weak its influence, abusing its power by, inasmuch as in it lies, exciting its readers to violence and crime.

We have now before us a copy of a local journal in which, after a tissue of abuse, which we shall not condescend to transcribe, the editor concludes as follows:—

"The funds for the gratuitous distribution of the LAYMAN come from the Exeter Hall Treasury. Copies of it have been sent to every police station in Ireland, and above 130,000 copies have been already circulated through the country, at an expense which it is really melancholy to contemplate.

"Such doings should not be allowed to go on. A stop must be put to them at once, and, as the most effective way, we would suggest the following simple one—

"Let every Catholic knock down the first man that puts into his hand a number of this vile periodical—for by doing so he gives him a deliberate insult and provocation, quite sufficient to justify a man in committing a breach of the peace."

We pass by the assertion about the Exeter Hall Treasury, of the existence of which we were previously ignorant; as, also, the assertion, that copies have been sent to every police station—as we know not on what authority our cotemporary makes such a statement, though we heartily desire that it may be true—and come at once to the admirable and simple, but perhaps somewhat ludicrous, plan of extinguishing the CATHOLIC LAYMAN, which our editorial opponent considers the most effective one.

"Let every Catholic knock down the first man that puts into his hand a number of this vile periodical! for by doing so he gives him a deliberate insult and provocation, quite sufficient to justify a man in committing a breach of the peace!"

We intend to enable our editorial friend (who appears to be as sensitive to insult, as any of the worthies of half a century ago), to begin his practice at this simple species of knock-down arguments, by presenting him with a copy of this number, through her Majesty's post, free of all charge, leaving it to the petty sessions at Limerick, or elsewhere, to settle the point of law, whether knocking down the post-man be a justifiable means of punishing the letter-carrier for not having opened and read, on his way from the post-office, all the newspapers addressed to the irascible editor, and ascertained accurately whether there were or not contained in any of them

such a deliberate insult and provocation as would justify a man (editor or not) in committing a breach of the peace! As, however, we have no serious expectation that this summary method of extinguishing our journal is likely to be brought into active operation, much less before the judicial bench, we would add one word of serious consolation, to soothe the irritated feelings of our susceptible cotemporary.

The CATHOLIC LAYMAN has now been in existence for nearly two years. He asserts that 130,000 copies have been already circulated. If its articles have been, as he also asserts, "so meaningless and without point, that they could neither make a Protestant a whit more steadfast in his faith, nor leave a doubt in the mind of any Catholic as to the truth of the religion he professes;" if the subject be, indeed, "such as no one but a mad fanatic would give a straw for reading;" and its columns "filled with nothing but the most stupid misrepresentations and lying calumnies of Catholicity and its priesthood," Roman Catholics would, no doubt, feel it as an insult that such a paper should be offered to them, without being instigated so to do by the pugilistic editor who has so tardily come forward to vindicate the honour of Irish Roman Catholics, and he may rest satisfied that not a single number of such "a vile periodical" as he describes, would ever be read by one of them.

We fear, however, that the anger of our combative friend, who is really doing his best to effect for us, what we have ever shrunk from doing for ourselves—viz., puff us into notoriety, and increase the desire to read our "fanatical effusions," is really attributable to another cause, and it is simply this. He knows we have been and are eagerly read by all intelligent Roman Catholics (and there are thousands of them in Ireland) who wish to hear both sides, and judge for themselves, and he and the class to which he belongs are extremely angry, not with us who provide, but with those who read anything but what the Roman Catholic priesthood thinks proper to approve of. If our pages were returned or destroyed without being read, can our readers doubt that the editorial wrath would melt away into a chuckle of delight, at the waste of the money of the supposed "Exeter Hall Treasury," which might otherwise have gone to the support of those whom he would brand as apostates, and who have so little regard for the truths in which they have been educated, as to "sell their souls" for a mess of pottage, the much-abused "soupers" of Kerry and "jumpers" of Connemara. It is the sad fact, that the age is gone by, in which Irishmen could be insane enough to mistake friendship for insult, and calm reasoning for fanatical animosity, which rouses the spleen of an adversary whom we do not even name, but would willingly bring to a better frame of mind, were it in the power of reasoning and Christian charity to do so.

That our English friends may not, however, conceive that it is all plain sailing with us in Ireland, we must at the same time enlighten them, and gratify a correspondent, by printing, without a single comment, a letter just received from a person who subscribes himself James Willson, Skibbereen, merely adding that we are ignorant whether or not there be such a person, or whether the signature be an assumed one.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

Skibbereen.

SIR—For the first time in my life your accused journal, yelped CATHOLIC LAYMAN, came across me—sent, I suppose, by some firebrand fanatic, for the purpose, it seems, of Protestantising, infidelising, uncatholicising, or anything-ising me. I assure you, sir, that your hell-born efforts, aided by the powers of darkness, and the exchequer of heretical England, will never be able to estrange the Irish from the ancient faith. You may as well give up the unhallowed work of believing our creed; it has withstood the attacks of all schismatics, heretics, &c., since the dawn of its establishment; and it now safely defies, and will till the consummation of time, all attempts of wicked, alien govern-

ments—all attempts of hired, vile, mean, mercenaries to shake or outroot it.

No wonder that an undying animosity should eternally exist between Catholic and Protestant, when such fiendish appliances are laid hold of by you and your well-paid "Priest Protection Society,"\* to disseminate nothing but lies and blasphemies beyond the conception of man.

Your writings, let me tell you, are a tissue of the grossest, the basest, and the most unprincipled, unscrupulous, effrontery. There is not a scintilla of charity blended in them throughout; if there was, Catholics would listen to, and respect them; but when your LAYMEN are, from first to last, one diabolical onslaught against Christianity, Pope, and Popery—one eternal tirade of misrepresentation, lies, infamy, and slander—can you expect other than that Catholics will burn your infamous, hellish productions, and not let them pollute their dwellings? What a plausible story comes out in your last vomit about a country station and Father John! Ah! Satan himself could not produce, if he had the power (but he certainly suggested it) a more iniquitous, shameless, conglomeration of lies. I may safely say, and not without reason, that your society are in uninterrupted communication with that boy. You and they show it. Noscitur ex sociis. Depend upon it, and take it upon my ipse dixit, tho' a laic, that a just Judge will one day arraign you before his unerring tribunal for the scandal you now show those little ones, of which Christ speaks. But you have the cheek to call upon Catholic bishops and priests to prove the "boasted infallibility of their Church." With sovereign contempt they treat your challenge. You admit your Church's fallibility; therefore, she is not the Church Christ promised to be with till the end of time; and hence, by reason of her avowed fallibility, she has within her, Atheists, denying God the Father; Deists, denying God the Son; Methodists, denying the Queen's supremacy; Calvinists, asserting that murders, perjury, &c., are all God's decrees; Unitarians, denying Christ's Divinity; Presbyterians, who would fain annihilate the Church of England; and, among innumerable other sects Ghorams,† denying baptismal regeneration. Are not these the fruits of liberty of conscience, and private interpretation of the Holy Scriptures? Seven-hundred-and-fifty sects of Protestantism have been enumerated. Is this a mark of unity? Assuredly not; and not having this mark, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, cannot be expected to govern your Church through the mouths of her bishops. You must admit (for Protestant history cannot deny it) that, unless you wish to add another flagrant lie to the black catalogue already uttered by you, and which you will continue to utter no doubt, the murderous, the adulterous, the incestuous King Henry VIII., was the founder of your iniquitous, perjuring, anti-Christian, bloated, mammon Church. Who was Luther, but an envious, a proud friar? And pride and envy were the cause of his apostacy. No sooner did he fall, than he broke his vow of chastity, and induced a nun to fall with him, and do the same: so Luther and his paramour lived and died in fornication. These were holy founders, and the faith, or, rather heresy, they spread is holy too. Yes; so holy that Luther is placed next to Christ and St. Paul. The Saviour of mankind, the Apostle of the Gentiles, and Luther—the firebrand of hell, the arch-heretic, the Apostle of Protestant, revolutionising England—put in juxtaposition, would make the very Mahometans blush! But your lies are the most unblushing and barefaced. By lies and money you propagate your tottering Church. By calumniating Popes, Popery, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, the confessional—in fact, anything Catholic—all Christianity, you keep from utter annihilation the most damnable heresies, blasphemies, and abominations ever broached, spoken, or practised by men.

Whilst you pour forth such ribald denunciations against our holy religion, we cannot characterise you anything less than demons—actually devils in human shapes; for Satan, if he were to walk amongst us, could not abuse us more—could not more turn into ridicule the ceremonies of our holy religion than you do and England's hireling press. I shall take another opportunity to address you. In the meantime I hope you will favour me with a reply, if you do not let this appear in your next issue.

Having thus for once gratified our correspondent by inserting at length a letter not quite in accordance with the spirit and tone of our paper, we shall only express a hope that his next communication may be written in a somewhat milder spirit, in which case we shall be happy to give him, as we have so often given others, the best reply in our power.

We regret to add, that an able letter, written in an unexceptionable spirit, in defence of the Infallibility of the Church of Rome, reached us too late for insertion in our present number—but will cheerfully be inserted in our next.

\* It is perhaps right to state the CATHOLIC LAYMAN never had the advantage of any connection whatever with this or any other society.—ED.

† Sic in original.